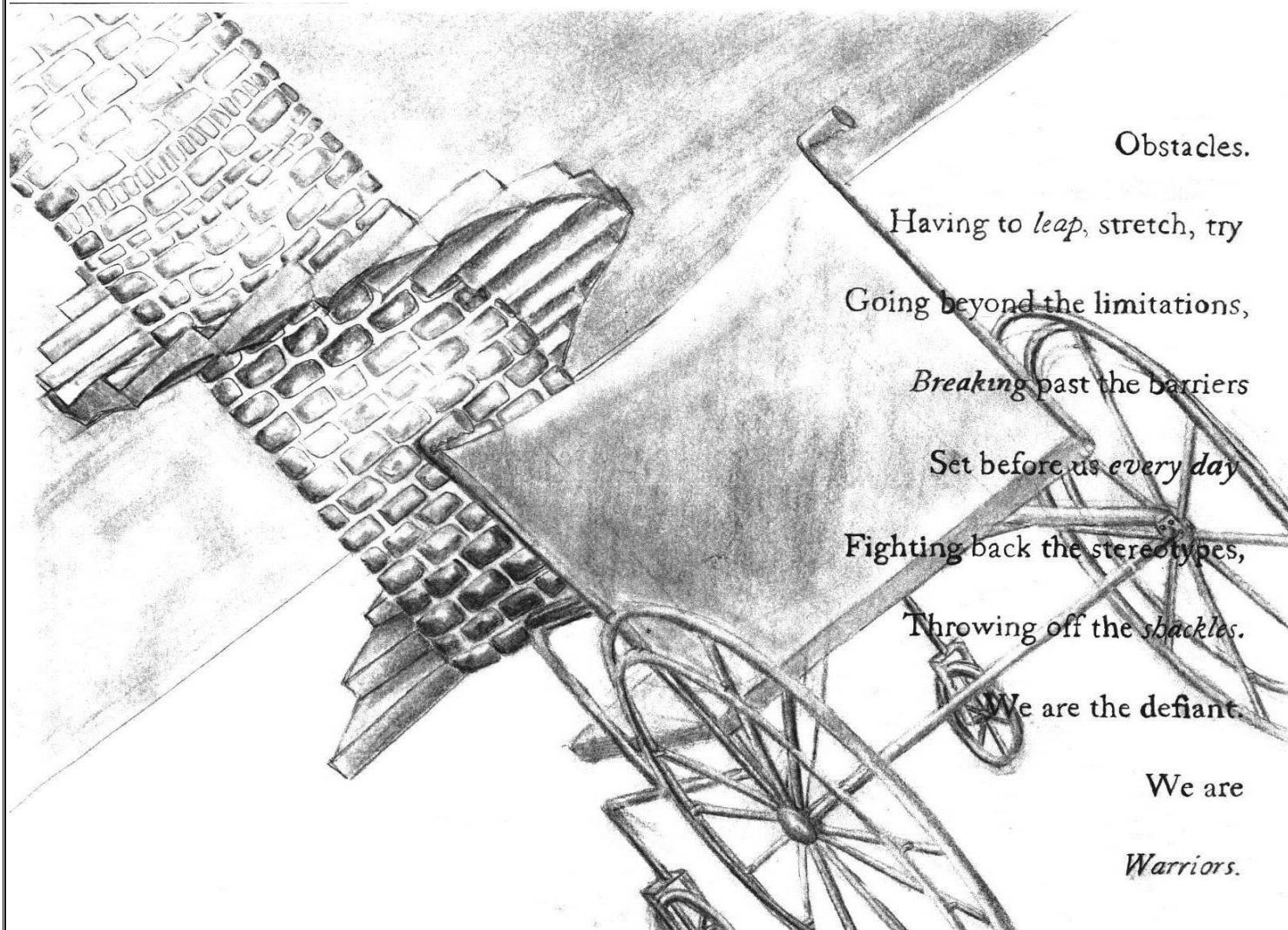


2009 Annual Report

Columbus Human Rights Commission



Obstacles.

Having to *leap*, stretch, try

Going beyond the limitations,

Breaking past the barriers

Set before us *every day*

Fighting back the stereotypes,

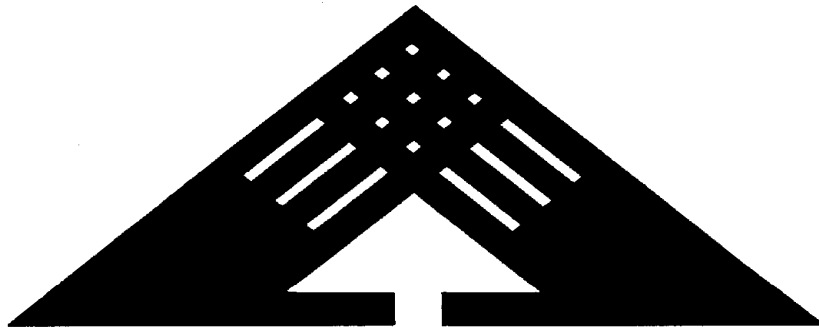
Throwing off the *shackles*.

We are the defiant.

We are

Warriors.

Report cover by:
Cecilia Gutknecht - 9th Grade
2010 J. Irwin Miller Human Rights Commission
Art Contest Winner - CSA New Tech High School



HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Columbus, IN

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Columbus, IN 47201
(812) 376-2532
TDD (812) 375-2720
humanrights@columbus.in.gov
<http://columbus.in.gov/chrc-index.html>

MISSION:

*TO LEAD COLUMBUS IN BUILDING AND MAINTAINING AN INCLUSIVE
COMMUNITY BY:*

- * Enforcing the Human Rights Ordinance*
- * Educating the public*
- * Challenging attitudes and systems that create barriers to equality*
- * Empowering community members to advance this mission.*



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CITY OF COLUMBUS - HUMAN RIGHTS ORDINANCE:

“It is the public policy of the City to provide all persons an equal opportunity for and in education, employment, public accommodations and acquisition through purchase or rental of real property including but not limited to housing. Equal educational and employment opportunities and equal access to and use of public accommodations and equal opportunities for acquisition of real property and access to credit as defined in Indiana Code, 24-4.5-1-301, are declared to be civil rights.

The practice of denying these civil rights to a person by reason of race, religion, color, sex, pregnancy, disability, national origin or ancestry of such individual is contrary to the principles of equal opportunity stated in this chapter and shall be considered discriminatory practices.

The promotion of equal opportunity without regard to race, religion, color, sex, pregnancy, disability, national origin or ancestry through enforcement, public education and other reasonable methods is the purpose of this chapter. It is also its purpose to protect employers, labor organizations, employment agencies, property owners, real estate brokers, lending institutions and insurance companies from unfounded charges of discrimination through the professional investigation and resolution of complaints. This chapter shall be construed broadly to effectuate its purpose.” -- *Columbus Human Rights Commission Ordinance 9.24.020*

COLUMBUS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE- 2009

Chairperson

Gilbert A. Palmer

Secretary

John Roberts

Vice Chairperson

Anthony McClendon

Treasurer

Akua B. Agyei

Commissioners:

Term Ends:

Akua B. Agyei	2012
Trena Carter	2011
Ian Kohen	2010
Greg Lewis	2012
Anthony McClendon	2012
Gilbert A. Palmer	2011
Rosalind Pegram	2010
Shiva Rallapalli	2010
John Roberts	2011
Jason Staley	2010
John Stroh	2012
Pamela Vincent	2011

City Council Liaison: Priscilla Scalf

Commission Attorney: Eric Hayes

Staff:

Director: Arlette Cooper Tinsley

Deputy Director: Lorraine Smith

Secretary: Lula Young

2009 CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Dear Mayor Armstrong, members of the Columbus City Council and Columbus citizens,

We have much to be proud of in Columbus. Our overall quality of life, including our schools, universities, world-renowned architecture, our nationally recognized parks and recreational facilities, all reflect the creativity, diligence and hard work of our citizens and local government working together. The shared values of diversity, justice and opportunity strengthens us in many ways as we continue to build a better community.

The Human Rights Commission and the volunteer Human Rights Commissioners are the torchbearers of these shared values and both are tasked with translating the principles into practice. The Commission is also responsible for enforcing the Human Rights' ordinance of our city, ensuring that all citizens can live happy, productive lives free of discrimination.



Gilbert A. Palmer,
Chairperson,
Human Rights Commission

I congratulate the Human Rights Commission staff, my fellow Commissioners, and all the volunteers who work diligently to make Columbus a place where all community members enjoy equally the benefits of our great community.

I serve on the Diversity Councils of both IUPUC and the Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation (BCSC), and it is clear from looking at the growing diversity of local youth that the Commission has a Luis J. Rodriguez, an award-winning author and activist once said, *"It is not enough to prepare our children for the world; we also must prepare the world for our children."* We owe it to ourselves and to future generations to continue to build a just and inclusive community.

The Commission staff and Commissioners supported the Heritage Fund's efforts to build a more inclusive community by facilitating the formation of CAMEO—the Columbus Area Multi-Ethnic Organization. We were honored when the Heritage Fund asked us to provide this support. Anyone can join CAMEO, and you should! Go to www.ColumbusCAMEO.org to join. Businesses and other community groups can become partner organizations. CAMEO is part of Columbus' future, and facilitating the creation of CAMEO is consistent the Commission's goal of "empowering community members" to advance human rights. Building an inclusive community requires many organizations that enrich Columbus, each in a different way. Nine founding ethnic associations came together with the support of the Heritage Fund to form CAMEO, and this new community group will help Columbus' welcome newcomers to our community and enrich the lives of long time residents of Columbus.

In 2009, the Human Rights Commission, as part of their continuous improvement efforts, completed two Six Sigma projects—one led by Black Belt Sameer Samudra and

another Lean Six Sigma Yellow Belt Project that included Director Tinsley and Deputy Director Lorraine Smith as part of the Mayor's Lean Six Sigma Project for all city departments, working with Ivy Tech on collaborative projects.

The Commission understands that it must continually become more efficient and effective, as government resources are increasingly limited, but at the same time is aware that the role of civil rights enforcement is vital to the future economic health of Columbus.

The Commission is fortunate to have City Council-appointed Commissioners whose skill and dedication have made this successful year possible. While all city agencies sustained budget cuts in 2009, including the Human Rights office, we are rising to the challenge and continuing to provide services.

We appreciate the support shown by this Mayor's administration and by City Council, as they support the vital work of the Commission.

With hard work, continuous improvement, and by forging cooperative alliances with other community groups, the Commission is committed to working toward this aim through the accomplishment of the goals we have set for 2009.

We remain in the service of the people of Columbus, and this report is

Respectfully submitted,

Gilbert A. Palmer

Gilbert A. Palmer

Chairperson, Human Rights Commission,

December, 2009

2009 DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Year in Review

Each of us can practice human rights ourselves, treating each other without discrimination, respecting each other's dignity and rights. – *Carol Bellamy, former director of the Peace Corps, UNICEF, and CEO of World Learning*

INTRODUCTION

2009 has been a “back to the future” year for human rights, as the 2009 caseload again emphasized sex discrimination in employment, as it did fifteen years ago, when I joined the organization as Director. [See graphics, pp. 16-19]. As a nation, we have unfinished business in human rights, and insuring that women are full members of the team and treated equally in every way-- in employment, housing, and education is part of that unfinished business. Forty Years after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the National Partnership for Women & Families undertook a study entitled “Women at Work: Looking Behind the Numbers 40 Years After the Civil Rights Act of 1964,” and concluded that “women of color as well as older and immigrant women are especially likely to experience certain types of discrimination.” Data showed that claims of sexual harassment and sex discrimination continue to rise, but the number of claims filed by white women has decreased, while those filed by black and Hispanic women have increased. Civil rights agencies like the Columbus Human Rights Commission find that as a workforce diversifies, women are particularly vulnerable to experiencing discrimination. David Grinberg, spokesman for EEOC, states, “We agree wholeheartedly that sex discrimination against women is still a major problem in the workplace. Women of color face a double dose of discrimination. It is a lingering problem we're addressing,” The Columbus Human Rights Commission will remain vigilant in its efforts to support all women in filing claims of discrimination that must be neutrally and professionally investigated by the Commission.

The cases that the Commission provided research and technical assistance in and were filed with federal and state agencies reflected the broad diversity and scope of human rights work—national origin, race, age, disability, gender, and retaliation were all bases for claims filed. Retaliation cases are very important to enforce, as they are filed by persons who believe that their choice to exercise their civil rights was the reason for retaliatory conduct in their workplace, school or housing. Civil rights are only as strong as peoples’ willingness to advocate for themselves, and they must be protected from retaliation.

The staff of the Columbus Human Rights Commission works every day to stay apprised of changes in civil rights law, shape its investigations accordingly, and educate the community to prevent problems before they occur. A professional staff under the supervision of volunteer Commissioners conducts the daily operations of the Columbus Human Rights Commission. Staff includes the Director, the Deputy Director, and one administrative

assistant. The Commission is mandated by ordinance to prevent and eliminate unlawful discrimination, protects the rights of both Complainants and Respondents, and is responsible for enforcing Columbus Human Rights Ordinance. The Human Rights Ordinance protects persons from discrimination in employment, housing, education, credit and public accommodations. Charges of can be filed alleging discrimination (*based on race, religion, color, gender, disability, ancestry, national origin, pregnancy, familial status (housing only), sexual orientation, gender identity and age (voluntary mediation only) and retaliation*) Local ordinance also protects those who have filed a complaint or participated in the investigation of a complaint from *retaliation* for such actions. Anyone claiming to be aggrieved by an alleged unlawful practice, and who can articulate a *prima facie* case pursuant to a recognized legal theory of discrimination, has the right to file a complaint charging discrimination under the ordinance of Columbus.

COMMISSIONERS

The City of Columbus Municipal Code states that the City Council shall appoint persons residing in Bartholomew County to serve on the Human Rights Commission for three-year, renewable terms, “serving without compensation and broadly representative of the community’s diversity.” Comprised of volunteer Columbus citizens, the Commission is able to effectively carry out its work because of the diversity of talent and experience brought to the Commission by each individual board member. For over nineteen years, the City Council has chosen an open application process for Human Rights Commission appointments. Any member of the community who wishes to serve on the Commission may fill out an application, which is then reviewed by the City Council member serving as a liaison to the Human Rights Commission—in 2008 Councilwoman Priscilla Scalf began her liaison duties for the Commission, as City Councilman T. Craig Hawes was sent for another tour of duty, in service of our country. Council Liaison Scalf continued as the liaison to the Commission in 2009. The Commission is extremely appreciative of her service to the Commission. Councilwoman Scalf, as well as other members of Council, review applications of prospective new commissioners and conduct interviews. The Human Rights Commission appreciates the time and care City Council takes by creating an open application process and selecting hard-working individuals with diverse backgrounds and experience to serve as volunteer commissioners. This year, after a two-year term of committed service, Commissioner Pamela Vincent chose to resign when she returned to school and needed to balance that commitment with employment. The Commission appreciates Commissioner Vincent’s dedicated service to the cause of human rights.

Commissioners Akua Agyei, Tony McClendon, Greg Lewis and John Stroh were reappointed in 2009. For the benefit of the reader, this report includes brief biographical information on current Commissioners:

Commissioner Akua Agyei has lived in Columbus for over six years and works at Cummins Inc. She came to the U.S. twelve years ago, leaving her home of Accra, Ghana, to earn her B.S. at Miami University of Ohio and her M.S. at Virginia Tech. She recently earned her MBA from Indiana University, while continuing to work full time. She currently serves as the Chair of the Cummins African & African-American Affinity Group (AAAAG). She serves as the Commission’s liaison to the Mayor’s Multi-cultural Awareness

Committee, as well as serving as Treasurer of the Commission in 2009. Akua and her husband recently brought a future Human Rights Commissioner into the world, her daughter, Oduma.

Commissioner Trena Carter, a more than twenty-year resident of Columbus, Commissioner Carter was appointed in late 2006. Trena works at Administrative Resources association (ARa), a non-profit governmental organization that works with local governments in Southern Indiana to assist in project planning and development to enhance quality of life by applying for and managing governmental grants, to implement those projects. She and her husband, Mike, are the parents of two daughters and have raised their family in Columbus. She has been a committed volunteer in the local schools, Girl Scouts, Leadership Bartholomew County and serves on the Human Resource Team and the Church Council at Sandy Hook United Methodist Church. Commissioner Carter served on the Ad Hoc Committee which planned the 2007 Annual Dinner Meeting in April, a special 45th anniversary celebration of the Commission.

Commissioner Ian Kohen was appointed to the Commission in 2004. He has been a member of the Columbus community for over seventeen years. Ian has held many positions at Cummins, Inc., including work as a Purchasing Leader and has been a Six Sigma Black Belt. His outside interests include spending time with his two sons Max and Henry and wife Mary, playing racquetball, being a Big Brother, working with teens in the Turning Point Dance Marathon, and being part of the Columbus Rotary Club. He has taught the “7 Habits of Highly Successful People” to many groups inside and outside of Cummins. In 2006, Commissioner Kohen chaired the Ad Hoc Committee that studied the issue of discrimination based sexual orientation, gender identity and age, as it related to enforcement mechanisms available to the Commission. Ian has served as liaison to the local Interfaith Forum and currently serves as liaison to the Gay/Straight Alliance.

Commissioner Greg Lewis is the Commission’s liaison to the Interfaith Forum here in Columbus and has also begun to represent the Commission at Columbus CAMEO. He is the chair of the social studies department at Columbus East High School, where he has taught since 1994, and Central Middle School, where he taught between 1992 and 1994. He has become well known for his portrayals of historic figures, including a different president each year for the last 14 years on Presidents’ Day. He has lived in Columbus since 1984, with his wife Nancy and two children, Lauren and Austin. He was raised in Louisville, Kentucky, and earned degrees from Miami University of Ohio, Indiana University, and Indiana Wesleyan University. He has demonstrated his commitment to public service through his volunteer work with the American Red Cross - Bartholomew/Brown County Chapter, Dance Marathon for Turning Point, Big Brothers/Big

Sisters, Youth As Resources, Columbus Soccer Club, and many other community service groups, as well as being involved with many student groups at East High School. Greg created and teaches an interdisciplinary English-U.S. History course called American Studies, and he developed a unit on diversity in America and makes issues of social justice a major focus of his teaching. In his spare time, Greg enjoys spending time with his family, playing soccer, hiking, and biking. In 2009, Greg traveled with a group of educators to Germany, a country and language he has long studied.

Commissioner Tony McClendon has lived in Columbus for fifteen years and he and his wife, Pat, have two daughters. He is the associate pastor at Faith Ministries, the head football coach at Central Middle School and the assistant track coach at East High School. He has in the past volunteered as a mentor at Northside Middle School in a program focused on at risk middle school boys called TALKS. He is a native of Atlanta, a graduate of Dartmouth College, works in sales management and as an adjunct instructor in the English department of Ivy Tech Community College. He has special skills as a public speaker that he brings to the Commission as well as a special interest in working with local youth. Tony is served as Vice-Chair of the Commission in 2009 and in the past, he has represented the Commission as a facilitator in a Partners in Education Class (PIE) on Diversity Issues. He has also facilitated youth discussions in local schools, at the Commission's request. He has served on the Commission's nominating Committee.

Commissioner Gil Palmer was first appointed to the Commission in 1993, and he has garnered such respect from his fellow commissioners that he has been unanimously elected Chairperson every year for fourteen years. The Chairperson is required to work very hard for the Commission, as he is responsible for reviewing all findings of fact, and requests for subpoenas, restraining orders, and he must prepare and hold any necessary hearings. Gil, a graduate of Leadership Bartholomew County, is a State Farm Insurance agent who works long hours at his office, but at the same time works tirelessly on behalf of the Commission and as a volunteer in the community, including his service in the Columbus Rotary, Centerstone of Indiana and Centerstone Research Institute boards, Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce, Mayor's Advisory Council, IUPUC Board of Advisors, IUPUC Diversity Cabinet, BCSC Diversity Leadership Committee, Columbus Economic Growth Council and Senior Center Services board. He and his wife, Dawn, have two grown children and two grandchildren, with a third child, a grandson who will be born in 2010.

Commissioner Rosalind Pegram was first appointed to the Commission in 2007. Commissioner Pegram, who is from Puerto Rico, is a twenty-year resident of Columbus. She is a former teacher for Monroe and Bartholomew counties. Commissioner Pegram

has a M.S. in Education from Indiana University-Bloomington and is bi-lingual in Spanish and English. She is currently working at her own business. Commissioner Pegram serves as the Commission's liaison to the Immigration Issues Group of Columbus. She represented the Commission on the Immigration forum with Senator Greg Walker and Representative Milo Smith. She volunteers for Proyecto Salud-Volunteers in Medicine, and she is a Founding Board Member for the new Columbus Latin American Association.

Commissioner John Roberts joined the Columbus community nine years ago and he currently is Dean of The School of Liberal Arts & Sciences at Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana-Columbus, and in the music ministry at Faith Ministries. He has worked most of his life as an educator, teaching in the Louisville Public Schools. When he first came to Columbus, he worked as Christian Education Coordinator at First Presbyterian Church. He earned degrees at Morehead State University, the University of Louisville and National University. He has a particular interest in low income and minority students, and while working in Louisville, he served on a team that developed a successful enrichment program for at-risk students in the Jefferson County Public Schools. He has also worked with the disability community, and has an interest in issues facing senior citizens. John is a father, and a grandfather of three. He and his partner Thom just bought a new home in downtown Columbus and are renovating it. John has served on the Ad Hoc Committee of the Commission which studied and then recommended changes to the Rules and Regulations providing a mediation process for complaints of sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination, and chaired the Ad Hoc Committee which planned the Commission's 45th anniversary celebration. John serves as secretary to the Commission.

Commissioner John Stroh has lived in Columbus for twenty-four years with his wife and children, and he is engaged in the practice of law. Earlier in his career he worked as a public school teacher in Washington Township Public Schools where he met his wife, Beth, and developed an innovative team-teaching, multi-grade program. He has a long record of commitment to social justice, working as a church youth leader, school volunteer, professional actor, juvenile probation officer, U.S. Postal Employee, volunteer project peace presenter and volunteer lawyer for Legal Aid. John has represented the Commission as a facilitator in a Partners in Education Class (PIE) on Diversity Issues and he served on the 2006 Ad Hoc Committee that first studied and then recommended changes to the Commission's Rules and Regulations to provide a mediation process for complaints of gender identity and sexual orientation discrimination. An experienced mediator, the Commission is fortunate to have John's service on the Board. He serves as a liaison to the Inclusive Community Coalition (ICC).

Commissioner Pamela Vincent was appointed to the Commission in 2008. Pamela has resided in Columbus for two years, and she has been active in the community for over four years through her employment with Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana in Columbus, where she recently served as Program Chair of Social Sciences and Humanities and continues to teach in the department. She attended University of Tennessee where she completed her Master's degree. Pamela has a particular interest in at-risk youth and adults as well as assisting those returning to the community from the criminal justice system. She is an advocate for improving the treatment of inmates and finding better ways to assist those convicted of drug offenses. Commissioner Vincent returned to school in late 2009, and chose to resign because of her responsibilities to her schooling, after serving close to two years as Commissioner.

COMPLIANCE, MEDIATION AND ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

[See graphics, pp. 16-19].

Civil rights law, at the local, state and federal level, has become increasingly complex in its nature and application. This increased complexity is principally due to the enactment of major legislation in the past decade, which affects the role of the Columbus Human Rights Commission at the local level because federal and state statutes and the resulting legal precedents impact interpretation of the local Human Rights Ordinance. In 2009, sex discrimination, pregnancy discrimination, and retaliation were the most frequently filed complaints at the Commission. This has not been the case for over three years—national origin had become the most frequently filed complaint. At a small agency, types of cases can vary significantly from year to year. Sex discrimination has long been a type of complaint with which the Commission frequently files, however. Our long-term economic health as a city is tied to how well we incorporate all workers, regardless of gender, into the economic health and vitality of our community. Sex and pregnancy discrimination are stubborn areas of employment discrimination—we continue to be challenged as a community to treat women fairly and equally in the workplace.

Instances of respondent-employers agreeing to mediation dropped in 2009, as they did in 2008. Only future years will tell us if this is a trend, but it appears that respondents are less likely to wish to mediate a complaint if it is part of an overall reduction in force in their workplace, for fear of calling into question numerous termination decisions. It is vitally important that employers follow the law when it comes to reductions in force, and the Human Rights Commission provides small to medium-size businesses with technical assistance in that regard.

All complaints this year were filed in the area of Employment. While the Commission did not receive formal complaints in public accommodation, education or housing, many instances of technical assistance allowed situations to be resolved informally, which is often best for the parties involved.

MONITORING COMPLIANCE

The Commission is a party to written agreements, which resolve complaints of alleged discrimination filed with the agency. A Commission staff person is assigned to monitor the terms and conditions of these agreements, as well as Commission orders. Deputy Director Smith monitored compliance agreements in 2009.

THE COMPLAINT PROCESS

Columbus ordinance provides that any person who claims to be aggrieved by an unlawful practice in the areas of employment, housing, public accommodations, credit and education and can articulate a prima facie case pursuant to a recognized legal theory of discrimination (*based on race, religion, color, gender, disability, ancestry, national origin, pregnancy, familial status (housing only), sexual orientation, gender identity and age (voluntary mediation only) and retaliation*) may file a complaint with the Columbus Human Rights Commission. The Commission shall review and, if necessary, investigate the complaint. Complaints must be filed within 90 days of the last discriminatory act alleged, except in housing, where some complaints may be filed 180 days from the last discriminatory act alleged.

An individual may write, e-mail, telephone or come into Columbus Human Rights Commission office to begin the filing process. If the complaint falls within the Commission's jurisdiction, a formal complaint may be submitted. The staff is available to assist in drafting a complaint based on information provided by the complainant. An employment, housing, or public accommodation complaint must be signed, verified and notarized before it can be officially filed with the Commission. Some inquiries were outside of the Commission's jurisdiction or beyond the timely filing limit and are referred to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or other agencies. The Commission offers a voluntary mediation program in all complaints prior to investigation, at the option of the parties. Mediation services offer a possible alternative to complete investigation.

When mediation services are not selected by one of the parties, or when mediation services fail, a complaint may be sent for full investigation.

The Commission is responsible for investigating all complaints filed. It is also responsible for conciliation of cases where the investigating commissioner has indicated there is probable cause to credit allegations of the complaints. During a full investigation the Commission staff person will interview the complainant, review relevant documents, conduct interviews with witnesses, and summarize the case for the investigating commissioner. The investigator's role is that of a neutral fact finder. The Commission staff does not determine the outcome of the case, but rather gathers and presents the facts with a recommendation, based on the application of relevant civil rights law, to a Chairperson of the Commission for a determination. All information discovered throughout the course of the investigation is gathered in an objective and impartial

manner. Depending upon the information obtained during the investigative process, the Chair makes a determination of either “Probable Cause” or “No Probable Cause.” An attempt will be made to reach a written settlement between complainant and respondent if the Commission finds “Probable Cause.” If conciliation efforts fail, the case may be scheduled for a public hearing.

MEDIATION PROGRAM

The Commission offers a voluntary procedure in which the parties to discrimination complaints filed with Commission may attempt to mediate and resolve their controversies short of having Commission investigate and process the complaint. The mediation procedure has been an effective means of resolving complaints, as in some years, more than 75% of all CHRC cases were referred to mediation. In 2009, the Commission no complaints were mediated, as the parties opted for investigation. But in 2008, the Commission successfully mediated its first sexual orientation in employment complaint—so it varies from year to year.

Eight years ago the Commission made a commitment to setting concrete, tangible, numeric caseload goals on a yearly basis for completion of various steps of the investigation and ultimately, case completion. The Commission is committed to continuous improvement in case processing. The Commission continues to offer mediation as a form of alternative dispute resolution to all complainants and respondents. Mediation is entirely voluntary. Some mediations result in cash settlements, and other mediations may result in re-training or modifications in policy.

The Commission continues to emphasize equitable remedies to discrimination, including training, reinstatement as a tenant or employee, education, and restructured business processes in order to prevent future discrimination.

If mediation fails or the parties decline to mediate, the Commission conducts an investigation. If evidence of discrimination is found, the Commission’s role is to make the complainant whole; that is, as close as possible, put the complainant back at a point where he or she would have been had the complainant not been discriminated against. To do this, one or two Commissioners are appointed as conciliators in each case where evidence of discrimination is found. The conciliation process brings together the assigned conciliators and the parties in various combinations to develop an agreement that will compensate the complainant for his or her loss due to discrimination. The agreement also provides for the implementation of policies and training to prevent future discrimination, as well as other equitable remedies, for example, reinstatement as an employee or a tenant, if that remedy is necessary to make the complainant whole. The Commission’s history of successful mediations and conciliations, thereby making public hearings unnecessary, is evidence of the importance of having skilled and knowledgeable commissioners appointed to the Commission.

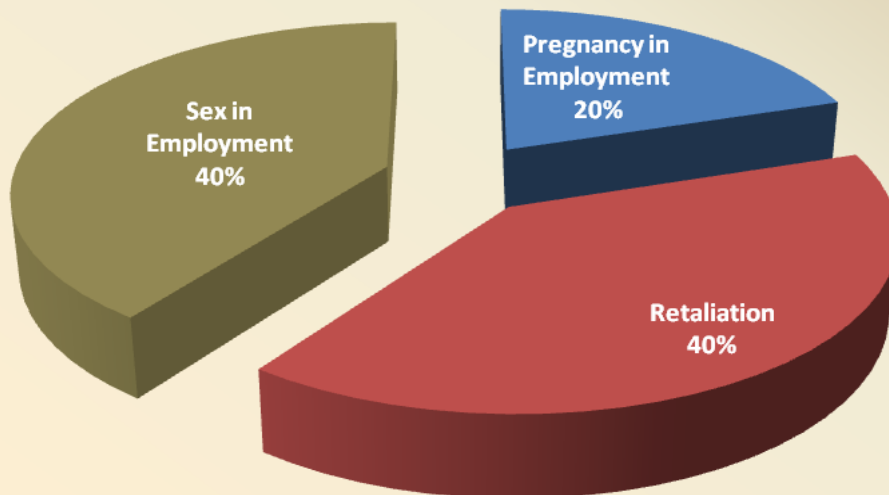
2009 Human Rights Commission Cases

2009 Human Rights Commission Cases
Field of Alleged Discrimination

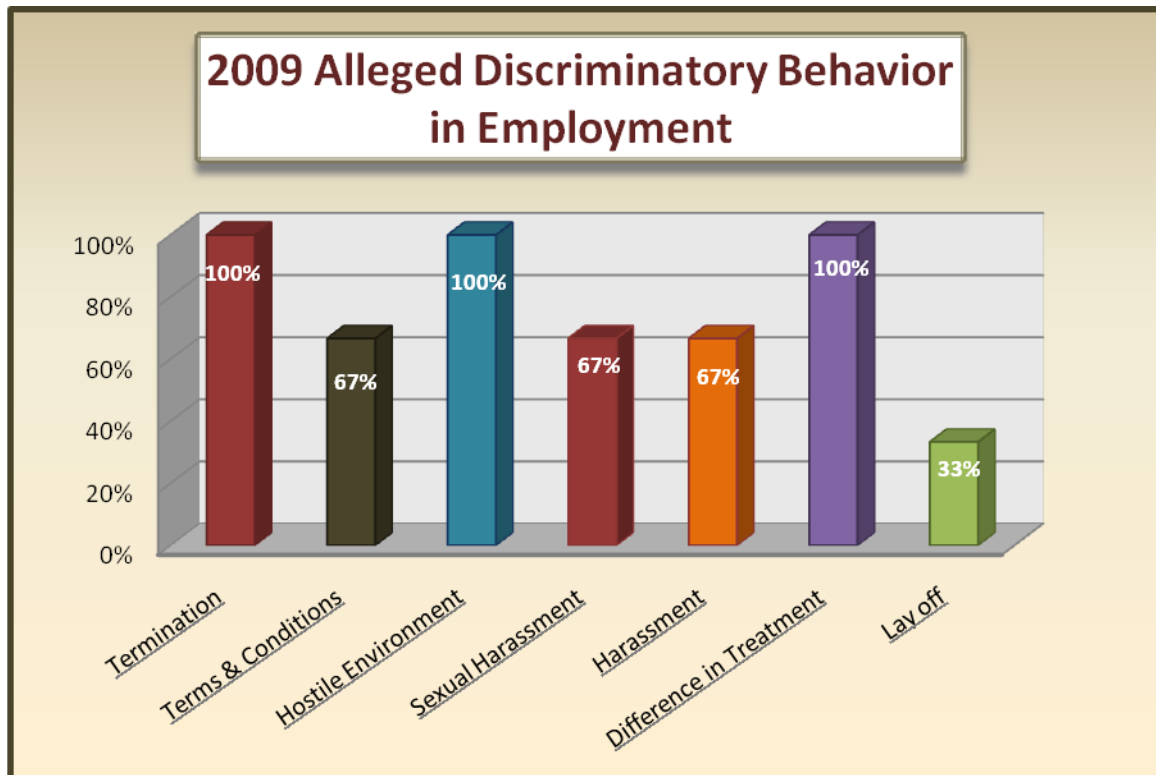


Basis of Alleged Discrimination

(Cases filed 12/30/08 through 12/18/09)



2009 Human Rights Commission Cases



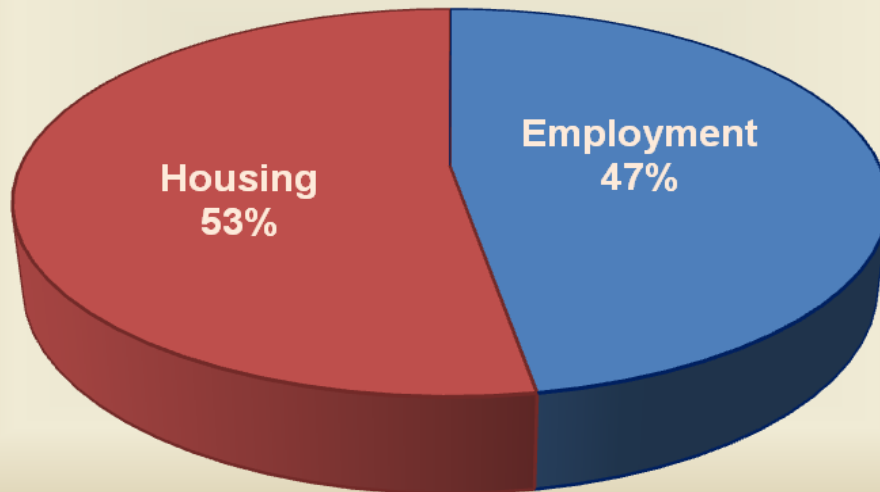
The remaining charts represent complaints that were filed with Technical Assistance provided by the Columbus Human Rights Commission. The agencies are identified as follows:

EEOC – Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

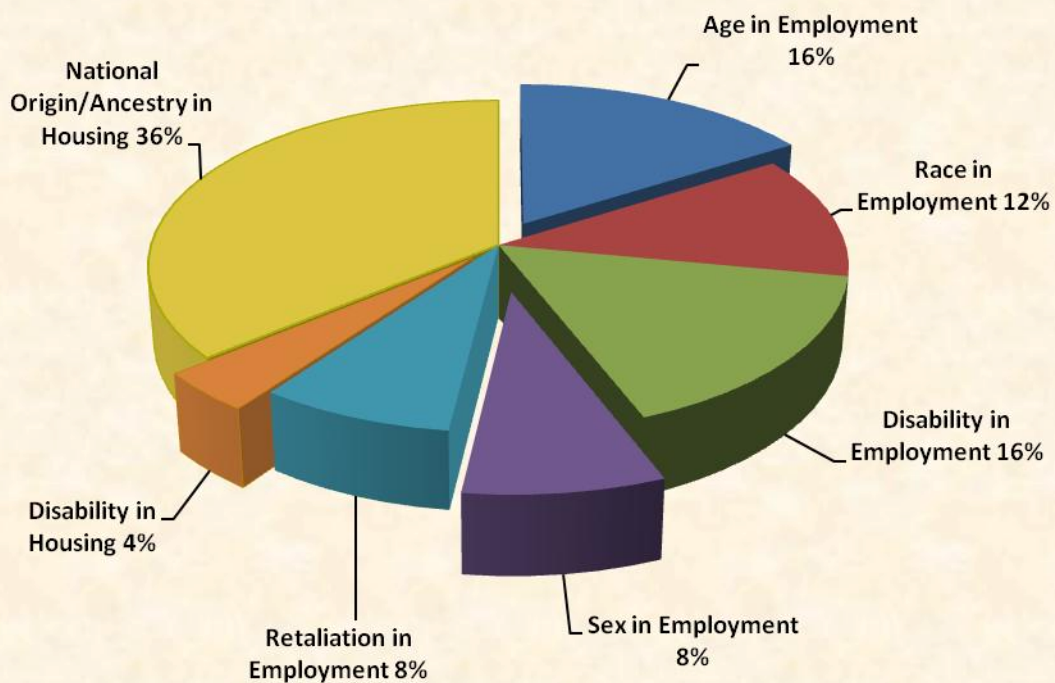
HUD – Department of Housing & Urban Development

ICRC – Indiana Civil Rights Commission

**2009 EEOC & HUD Complaints Filed with
CHRC Technical Assistance**



BASIS OF EEOC & HUD COMPLAINTS 2009



COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND OUTREACH 2009:

In addition to its enforcement and compliance activities, the Commission is also required by ordinance to inform the public about civil rights laws, what constitutes discrimination and how acts of discrimination can be avoided. The Columbus Human Rights Commission's technical assistance and training program sponsors, develops, and conducts a vast amount of training across the Columbus, especially considering the small size of the office. This task is accomplished through seminars and conferences that are open to the public, onsite training and presentations for private businesses, municipalities, college-level classes, K-12 classes, the annual dinner meeting and the development of its website. During 2009, the agency conducted seminar and training sessions throughout the Columbus, training public and private organizations, civic groups, neighborhood organizations, realtors, landlords and schools. The Commission's information services are provided free of charge to individuals throughout Columbus. Civil rights topics most often requested included issues relating to sexual harassment, fair housing, diversity training and the history of diversity in Columbus.

In addition to information and training, the agency creates and maintains Commission publications. During 2009, the agency distributed hundreds of informational brochures and fielded telephone inquiries asking for assistance. Publications of the Columbus Human Rights Commission include its Annual Report, its Rules & Regulations, brochures on topics such as *Human Rights*, *Fair Housing*, *Pregnancy Discrimination*, *familial status discrimination*, *Anti-Bullying/Harassment in Education*, with one general brochure available in Spanish, and the periodic publication of the Commission's newsletter.

During 2009, the Commission continued to update and improve pages on the City's informational web site. The site not only provides information on the Columbus Human Rights Commission, an oral history video of civil rights in Columbus, its Commissioners and the law it is empowered to enforce, but it has links to other state human rights organizations and various civil rights related web sites. The web page address is www.columbus.in.gov and then under services, select "human rights." The Director and Deputy Director continued to provide technical assistance to local businesses, community groups and individuals with regard to their civil rights questions in 2009. Often this will involve extensive research and preparation, as many times employers wish to understand the intersection of various laws, and community groups need assistance in furthering their human rights goals, and will ask the Commission to review and/or draft documents on their behalf.

This service has become incredibly important as businesses have increasingly outsourced to small and medium-sized businesses that lack in-house counsel or human resources departments. The Commission is aware that small to medium-sized businesses are the engine of the economy, and that

to grow, those businesses must implement successful and legally compliant policies and procedures.

Community education and outreach activities conducted by Human Rights staff and Commissioners in 2009 have included: *Deputy Director Lorraine Smith as Keynote Speaker at the Black History Month celebration at Ivy Tech Community College; presentations in the community by Commissioners John Roberts, Ian Kohen, and Tony McClendon; Richards Elementary Career Day; Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; Juneteenth Events; Statewide Holocaust Memorial Events; Mayor's Community Events; Monthly County-Wide Bullying Prevention Taskforce meetings; Taylorsville Elementary Safety Committee; Immigration Issues Committee Meetings; Mayor's Multi-Cultural Awareness Committee meetings; India Association Summer-fest attendance; Chinese New Year celebration; ADA State-wide Teleconferences; Fair Housing Trainings to Local Land Management Companies; History of Diversity in Columbus to local K-12 classes and college classes; East Senior Project Judging; Youth Salute; Richards Exchange City; PIE (Partners in Education Classes) including a presentation by the Director, "What's Age Got to Do With It?" and a Statewide Conference for Social Workers on Hate Groups in Indiana, Hate Crimes and the Psycho-pathology of Youth Involvement in Hate Groups.*

NETWORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY: PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS IN 2009:

The Commission continued to collaborate and partner with other organizations concerned with human rights, in order to better fulfill our mission of "challenging attitudes and systems that create barriers to equality":

CAMEO: In 2009, Director Arlette Tinsley completed her facilitation work to support the formation of the Columbus Area Multi-Ethnic Organization (CAMEO), a new project of the Heritage Fund, The Community Foundation of Bartholomew County, to bring together different Ethnic Associations in Columbus and foster a welcoming community, as the Nationalities Council and International Center have done in Indianapolis. As Mayor recognized in his State of the City address in 2008, this is an innovative project that will help Columbus fuel its economic growth in the future, as communities grow when they welcome newcomers. The Commission now has a representative to the group, and Commissioner Greg Lewis serves as the Liaison. All Commissioners, just like the community, are welcome to attend monthly CAMEO meetings.



Bartholomew County Flood Recovery Team: Periodic civil rights questions/technical assistance

were provided to various members of the Bartholomew County Flood Recovery Team by Human Rights Commission staff. Whenever there is a tragedy that involves people being displaced from their homes and jobs, civil rights issues arise as people try to recover their jobs and find new housing, or navigate the process of repairing their homes. The Human Rights Commission staff initially made themselves available 24/7 to Red Cross volunteers who had several questions about fair housing law when the flood first occurred in 2008, as they tried to place individuals and families in available housing in the community. The Commission continued to provide support as needed in 2009. .

Heritage Fund– The Community Foundation of Bartholomew County: Deputy Director Smith continues to serve on this important foundation, and the Commission is pleased to encourage and support community service amongst its employees. Deputy Director Smith is serving on various subcommittees, including grants and the Lilly Scholarship selection Committee. Deputy Director Smith was also selected to co-chair the Outreach Committee which is spearheading the new initiative, CAMEO (Columbus Area Multi-Ethnic Organization).

COMMISSIONER LIAISONS:

The Commission has successfully implemented a Commissioner Liaison process, whereby Commissioners serve as the liaison to key groups in our community who have requested ongoing communication and collaboration with the Human Rights Commission. Several Commissioners, including Commissioners Lewis, Stroh, Kohen, Pegram, and Agyei serve as Liaisons to various groups in the community.

- **Mayor's Multi-Cultural Awareness Committee:** Commissioner Akua Agyei served as the Commission's representative to the Mayor's Multi-Cultural Awareness Committee in 2009, and the Human Rights Commission, and the Committee worked on several projects, including the Cultural Awareness website, Ethnic Expo, and Neighbors Talking events.
- **Leadership Bartholomew County 2009:** In November, Deputy Director Smith and Director Tinsley partnered with Fredricka Joyner, moderator of LBC, to offer diversity day training for LBC participants, focusing on all aspects of diversity.
- **NAACP:** The Commission continues to offer technical assistance and support to members of the NAACP and the organization as a whole. NAACP members have referred students to the Commission to get support for international education, as our donations account and policy permits.
- **Economic Diversity Council/African American Association:** A new community group formed in 2006, and in 2009 Chairperson Palmer continued to represent the Commission in these discussions. Deputy Director Lorraine Smith facilitated a series of discussions with this group to first look at the possibility of creating an African American Association, in order to

participate in the new CAMEO group being formed by the Heritage Fund. The group decided to go in this new direction, and Deputy Director Lorraine Smith facilitated the formation of their bylaws and creation of the new Columbus African American Association, which includes African American members and members of the African Diaspora. The new African American Association, first convened by Tom Harmon of Harmon Construction, Frank Griffin and Hubert Goodman of Cummins Inc., continues its original goal of advocating for the African American community as part of the economic development plan of the city and their long-term goal is to mobilize the African-American community based upon the ten 'covenants' outlined by Tavis Smiley in his book, *A Covenant with Black America*. The Association is developing subcommittees to research education, economic development and justice in the Columbus community.

- **Su Casa:** Staff continued to offer support to Su Casa clients when civil rights issues arise. Commissioner Rosalind Pegram is the liaison to this group.
- **Immigration Issues Group:** A new grassroots community group was convened by Laura Hurt in 2006 and meetings continued in 2009, in an effort to bring together social service agencies, government agencies, school officials, human resource managers and other business leaders who work with the immigrant community to address various issues affecting the health, quality of life, and civil rights of immigrants. Commissioner Rosalind Pegram is the liaison to this group.
- **Inclusive Community Coalition:** A new community group was formed in 2007 to focus on community education regarding sexual orientation and gender identity through non-political forums, and the Human Rights Commission voted to become a member of this group, with Commissioner John Stroh acting as Commission liaison. Commissioners and staff attended various ICC events in 2009.
- **Interfaith Forum:** The Commission continued to support this group's programming with Commissioner Greg Lewis acting as liaison.
- **Gay/Straight Alliance now the Columbus Pride Alliance:** Commissioner Ian Kohen was appointed as liaison for 2006 and continued in this role in 2009. Commissioner Kohen worked hard to maintain effective communication with the Pride Alliance. Commissioner Kohen also helped provide technical assistance to students in Columbus seeking to start a student G/SA, and Commissioner Kohen was integral in referring a G/SA meeting attendee to the Commission to file a Complaint in 2008.
- **Police Audit and Review Committee:** Chairperson Palmer and Director Tinsley served as Human Rights representatives to the Police Audit and Review Committee's quarterly meetings in 2009. The Board of Works and Public Safety's resolution concerning the Audit and Review Committee requires the Human Rights Commission to send a representative to this Committee. No appeals to the Citizen's Review Board of the Audit and Review Committee were heard in 2009. The Director handles all of the processing/paperwork of such an appeal.

SHARPENING THE SAW—CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR STAFF AND COMMISSIONERS:

Continuing Legal Education: Director Tinsley and Deputy Director Smith attended ongoing continuing legal education so as to offer the best service possible to the community members and Commissioners were offered conference and training opportunities.

HATE/BIAS 2009:

The Columbus Human Rights Commission is a longtime member of the **Indiana Hate Crimes Reporting network**, working to educate the community with regard to bias/hate crimes, bias/hate intimidation, and taking reports from the community, as needed, to submit to local law enforcement, the Indiana Civil Rights Commission, or federal law enforcement, as appropriate.

Sadly, as soon as now President Barack Obama declared his candidacy, there was a national spike in bias/hate crimes across our great nation, combined with a 40% increase in hate crimes against Latinos over the last four years, as reported by the FBI. As part of Indiana's Bias Crimes Reporting Network, the Commission assists victims of hate and intimidation and we educate the community on the danger of hate groups and hate crimes. It is vital that we keep our youth from being manipulated by hate groups that try to attract young people through their websites, music and literature. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, hate groups have grown by 54% since 2000 in the U.S., and Indiana is home to 16 hate groups. In fact, Columbus, in Bartholomew County, is surrounded by counties that have hate groups that claim those counties as a home.

The Director of the Commission has been invited to present several statewide presentations on hate groups in Indiana, including at the state conference, National Association of Social Workers (NASW)- Indiana in June 2009. The Commission provides resources, technical assistance and training on hate crimes and hate groups.

2010 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal: **ENFORCING THE ORDINANCE**

Objectives:

- Continuously improve procedures, policies and processes to effectively and efficiently enforce the new amendments to the Commission Rules and Regulations regarding age, sexual orientation and gender identity, through voluntary mediation
- Continue to implement strategies to increase efficiency and effectiveness in complaint investigations and case processing:
- Close minimum of 12 cases by January 1, 2011, and continue to make efficient and effective investigations and case processing the top priority of staff with a goal of closing each complaint filed in 2010 within one year of the date it is filed.
- Continue to facilitate settlement between the parties whenever possible.
- Offer training to any new Commissioners so that they may assume their duties.
- Update the Commission's Secretary's Manual to reflect changes in process and procedures due to changes in Rules and Regulations.

Goal: **EDUCATING THE PUBLIC**

Objectives:

- Implement Six Sigma Voice of the Customer improvements with Commissioners and re-vamp Commissioner training to create "Commissioner as Human Rights Ambassador" Speaker model
- Re-allocate Director and Deputy Director's time to allow Commissioners to take a significant role in community education
- Create Speakers' Bureau brochure highlighting Commissioners
- Continue newsletter distribution and maintenance of websites (as economically feasible).
- Continue to provide technical assistance and training to local businesses, organizations and schools, as requested, as office schedule allows and using existing training materials.
- Continue to send Commission staff and volunteers to general speaking engagements throughout the community to educate the community regarding the work and mission of the CHRC, as office schedule allows and using existing training materials.
- Support the creation and independence of CAMEO, the Columbus Multi-Ethnic Organization, and their strategies and goals for operating as a cultural welcoming center for the community
- Support the Mayor's Multicultural Committee's work
- Continue Anti-bullying/Anti-harassment training as requested
- Continue to distribute the Oral History video in all appropriate forums
- Annual Dinner
- Essay Contest and Poster Art Contest
- Black History Month} Continue projects done in past as applicable
- Women's History Month} Continue projects done in past as applicable
- Continue to build and organize CHRC lending library of human rights resources, books and training materials

Goal: **NETWORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY**

Objectives:

- Maintain Commission representative on Mayor's Council for Multicultural Awareness and provide technical assistance
- Maintain Commission representative on community's Gay/Straight Alliance, Transit Committee, Mayor's Cultural Awareness Committee, BCSC's school conflict resolution committee, BCSC Bullying Prevention Task Force, Audit & Review Committee, Immigration Issues Forum, The Interfaith Forum, LBC and the Inclusive Community Coalition.

- Explore additional Liaison roles for Commissioners in the community
- Continue to provide training and technical assistance to LBC as requested, and collaborate on community forums as requested
- Continue to support Welcoming Community Projects, as requested
- Continue newsletter distribution and maintenance of websites (as economically feasible)
- Support the work of the I.U.P.U.C. and Ivy Tech Diversity Cabinet as requested

Goal: **CHALLENGING ATTITUDES & SYSTEMS THAT CREATE BARRIERS TO EQUALITY**

Objectives:

- Schools: Martin Luther King celebration— help with planning if requested; Schools: Complaint Resolution Process--- maintain appointee as requested by BCSC
- Explore Commissioner role in supporting with BCSC Schools
- Disability Awareness: continue to provide information, research and support for advocates in the community.
- Collaborate with BCSC, NAACP, as well individual community leaders, agencies and organizations to help remedy the achievement gap in our community, relative to minority youth and to address current human rights issues in the community.
- Support the Mayor's Multicultural Awareness: maintain appointee and provide technical assistance, as requested.

--- ADOPTED BY THE COMMISSION: December, 2009

COMMENTS ON THE HISTORY AND PURPOSE OF THE COLUMBUS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

HISTORY

The Columbus Human Rights Commission had its beginnings in 1962 when Mayor E. A. Welmer created the Mayor's Commission on Human Relations. The Commission began as a small group of concerned and respected local citizens with no power of legal enforcement. Complaints were filed in the Mayor's office or with individual Commissioners appointed by the Mayor. The Commissioners' only tool was their personal commitment to the formidable work of the Commission and their powers of verbal persuasion—they called it "friendly persuasion." The Commission, at this time, functioned under challenging conditions, without enforcement powers or city funding.

In 1972, because the City Council recognized the need for the Commission to have stronger tools with which to combat discrimination, City Council passed an Ordinance that gave the Commission legal enforcement powers. At this time, the name was changed from the Mayor's Commission on Human Relations to the Columbus Human Rights Commission. In 1975, a part-time Administrative Assistant for the Commission was hired and funded by the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA). In 1977, the City Council reaffirmed its commitment to a community that does not tolerate discrimination by funding the Commission. In the 1980s and most recently in 1992, the jurisdiction and scope of the Human Rights Ordinance was expanded by City Council, transforming the Columbus Human Rights Commission into the comprehensive civil rights enforcement agency it is today.

PURPOSE OF LOCAL COMMISSIONS:

Most historians place the beginning of the civil rights movement in the era 1950 through 1968. Beginning in 1967 with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1967, the federal government passed the most significant civil rights legislation that this country would ever see and for the first time, the full force of the federal government was exercised against discrimination in this country. This passage sent a strong message that this country stood firmly behind the concepts of equal opportunity and non-segregation. The passage of the legislation was passed with the notion discrimination is not bound by state, region or locality and that local governments support the effort of anti-discrimination. Just as the federal government serves as the conscience of the nation regarding discrimination, localities serve as the conscience of cities and towns. To address the broad nature of discrimination, which can occur in various facets of community life, many states and localities within those states created human rights commissions to fill in the gaps between federal, state and local efforts to help combat discrimination. The continuing attack on the problem of discrimination must be equally broad. It must be both private and public – it must be conducted at national, state, and local levels – it must include action from the legislative, judicial and executive branches. Discrimination knows no sectional or state boundaries. As a result, the Columbus Human Rights Commission currently operates in a legal system of parallel jurisdiction – the local ordinance enforced by the Commission contains language very similar to state statute, enforced by the Indiana Civil Rights Commission, and federal statutes, enforced by various federal government agencies.

COLUMBUS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION CONTRIBUTES TO THE VITALITY OF ITS COMMUNITY BY PLAYING AN INTEGRAL ROLE IN A BROAD CIRCLE OF REMEDIES IN FIVE MAIN AREAS:

Even with progress over the past four decades, discrimination persists and limits opportunity – all of which negates the economic health and quality of life of a community. As a result, local commissions exist to make sure that everyone in the community has an equal opportunity in employment, housing, education, credit and public accommodations. Local commissions don't exist to make money or produce a profit; it doesn't produce a tangible product. But a fundamental question for many is: how do local Commissions, such as the Columbus Human Rights Commission, contribute to the overall success and welcoming nature of a community?

The Columbus Human Rights Commission contributes to Columbus' vitality and excellent quality of life by playing an integral role in a broad circle of remedies in five main areas: (1) Strategic partnering in Economic Development, (2) Comprehensive Enforcement of Civil Rights Laws, (3) Proactive Enforcement by providing free technical assistance to local businesses and community outreach to organizations, (4) the ability to respond to rapidly changing demographics, and (5) in providing local solutions to local problems:

The Commission is a strategic partner in economic development:

Clearly, discrimination hampers the economic growth of a community by preventing the maximum development and utilization of our manpower. The federal and state governments have decided that local civil rights enforcement is a priority they wish to encourage because federal and state civil rights agencies continue to be over-burdened with cases, under-staffed and stretched resources and they cannot always provide the most comprehensive enforcement of civil rights law. As a result, some federal and state grants require a community to have local civil rights enforcement to even be considered for the grant money, and most federal and state grants favor applicants who have local enforcement of civil rights. Although the city's budget is made up of local tax dollars, a portion of the city's budget each year is made up of federal and state funds, not just local tax dollars. And because the federal and state governments have control over these taxpayer-supported funds, they can choose which communities will receive federal and state funds. The local Commission helps the city receive over 2 million dollars a year in state and federal grants for economic development that make possible senior housing, affordable housing, city buses and bus transportation, better roads and bridges, better technology for crime-fighting and many other improvements.

The Commission provides more comprehensive enforcement of civil rights laws:

The city's decision to have local civil rights enforcement is like the city's decision to have a local police force—the county's sheriff's department is still there and the state police are still there, and the FBI is still there, but citizens of Columbus benefit by getting a police response to their 911 call in roughly five minutes, rather than possibly waiting longer if another law enforcement agency had to respond. By having local enforcement of civil rights, the city receives more comprehensive enforcement. The strong institutional presence of the local commission helps maximize equal opportunity services.

Local Commissions ensure that individuals have meaningful access to EEO technical expertise and the investigatory process. By responding effectively to a wide array of discrimination cases that have varying levels of complexity, claimants are ensured that they have access to enforcement processes to vindicate citizens' rights.

The Commission has jurisdiction to look into complaints filed against employers with six or more employees, which is smaller than the EEOC's jurisdiction. The Columbus Human Rights Commission is the only agency required to investigate all officially filed complaints of discrimination in the City of Columbus. What does that mean in real terms? It means the little guy can get help. It means a server in a restaurant who is sexually harassed can get help, even if she does not work for a national chain of restaurants. The Columbus Human Rights Commission provides more comprehensive enforcement and a quicker response.

The Commission provides cost effective technical assistance to local businesses and community outreach programs, in order to prevent local problems before they occur:

While Columbus is home to a Fortune 500 company who has attorneys and human resource professionals working in-house, Columbus is also home to many small businesses that do not have the resources to have an attorney on retainer or have a large personnel department. Yet smaller businesses must comply with civil rights laws, too, and those same businesses support the work of the Commission through their payment of local tax dollars, as they do all local government services. The Commission provides local businesses with technical assistance without charge that is not available from state and federal agencies.

The staff of the Commission answer business people's questions on the phone, provide model policies and other resources, and provide training without charge to local employers and their employees, to local property management companies and their employees, to local public and private schools, and to local places of public accommodation. Area businesses receive an extremely high level of service from the Commission, which they support through their payment of local taxes. A local commission facilitates cost effective, efficient delivery of services in the prevention of discrimination and remedy of discrimination.

The intangible value of these trainings and resources offered by the Commission come in the form of having a direct impact upon changed behavior in our schools, workplaces and public accommodations, with a good deal of the work done behind the scenes. For instance, so much work done behind the scenes is nevertheless very valuable to the community, and those individualized resources and support are not available on a federal and state level. The local commission provides cost-effective, efficient delivery of human rights services.

The Commission provides Columbus with the ability to respond to rapidly changing demographics:

The Columbus community is changing demographically, which creates a need to respond in a way that facilitates community growth and stability and allows all community members to prosper. Changing demographics and shifting population trends only heighten the critical need for outreach into local communities. People must have confidence in a community's ability to respond effectively when they seek assistance in vindicating their rights. But the presence of the Columbus Human Rights Commission makes Columbus well positioned to meet the needs of the increasingly diverse community it serves. As a critical piece to creating a welcoming community and a healthy quality of life, the Columbus Human Rights Commission partners with community groups to educate community members about their legal rights and to educate employers about their legal obligations – while also bridging understanding on cultural differences.

The Commission, a local, all-volunteer eleven-member Board, ensures that here is a local alternative – local solutions to local problems, rather than civil rights law enforcement agencies from the federal government and the state government being the only alternative—and therefore coming to Columbus to investigate and enforce all civil rights violations.

The Commission was originally founded when there was no financial incentive to provide local enforcement of civil rights. Local citizens saw that there were problems of discrimination in Columbus that were not being adequately addressed by state and federal agencies, and decided to address them locally. According to testimony from the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, it is generally held that a complaint handled at the local level affords an opportunity for a more expedient response and a greater potential for a satisfactory resolution. Many Columbus citizens believed, and still believe that the best solutions to challenges facing this community will come from within this community. All staff persons are required to live in or adjacent to Bartholomew County, and all of the volunteers who serve as Commissioners live in Bartholomew County. The Commission is controlled by an eleven-member Board of volunteers, appointed by City Council and sworn into office by the Mayor. The community originally founded the Commission because it was the right thing to do, and the reason the Commission continues to serve the community is not only because it makes sense financially, but simply because it is the right thing to do.

The Commission's forty-seven-year history stands for the principle that Columbus values all members of the community. Columbus is open to persons of all races, religions, abilities and ethnic backgrounds to join the community, contribute, and be fully included. Beginning in 1962, with wisdom and foresight, elected officials and other community leaders created the Commission in order to enforce the principles of fair treatment, respect, and inclusion, and with that same wisdom and foresight, today's elected officials and community leaders continue to sustain a strong Human Rights Commission. The continued support of City Council members and Mayors from both political parties has given Columbus a progressive human rights ordinance that identifies our community as committed to equal treatment and willing to strive toward full inclusion in all aspects of community life.

2010 BENJAMIN M. KING HUMAN RIGHTS ESSAY CONTEST & J. IRWIN MILLER HUMAN RIGHTS ART CONTEST REPORT

2010 Essay Topic: “Listen to a Life”

What can you learn when you listen to a life? Young people can become more aware of their own dreams and goals – and what's needed to achieve them – when they hear the real-life stories of older adults. Young people can develop an appreciation for the ongoing value and contributions made by older adults – thereby helping to prevent age discrimination in our society. The national Listen to a Life Essay Contest is also an opportunity to build closer connections between young and old as they get to know each other in new, often unexpected ways.

2010 Art Contest Topic: “Free Your Mind”:

People with disabilities want to tear down barriers. A barrier is anything that prevents or hinders people with disabilities from being independent, productive and included in the mainstream of the community. There are physical as well as attitudinal barriers.

Physical barriers can include stairs, lack of Braille signs, or telephones and drinking fountains mounted too high for persons using wheelchairs to have access to them. Attitudinal barriers can include language used when speaking to or about people with disabilities; ignoring people with disabilities because they make us feel uncomfortable; or not including people with disabilities in a program or activity.

ESSAY & ART CONTEST DIRECTIONS & INSTRUCTIONS:

To enter the essay contest, a young person who is a 5th-12th grader interviewed an older person over 50 years (could not be a parent; they could be a grandparent, older friend, mentor, neighbor, nursing home resident, etc.) about their hopes and goals through their life, how they achieved goals and overcame obstacles, or how dreams may have changed along the way. What life advice can the older person share? The young person then wrote an essay (300 words maximum-- all words counted) based on the interview. For art: Students were asked to create a work of art that depicts one or more of the following: A) Illustration of the theme “Free Your Mind”-- by embracing people's differences, we open ourselves to a world of new possibilities. When we free our minds and see the potential inside everyone, we'll expand our horizons – and our circle of friends. or B) Celebrate and illustrate the Columbus Human Rights Commission's protection of persons with disabilities from discrimination.

2010 BENJAMIN M. KING HUMAN RIGHTS ESSAY & J. IRWIN MILLER HUMAN RIGHTS ART CONTEST WINNERS

Winners of the Benjamin M. King Essay and J. Irwin Miller Art Contests are honored at the Commission's annual dinner where they are presented with a \$100 savings bond, and a book of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s sermons and writings. The Human Rights Commission congratulates the following winners of the 2010 Essay & Art Contests:

Elementary Essay Division

WINNER: Ahaan Singhal
ABC Stewart Montessori – 6th Grade
Teacher: Mr. Jerry Maulin

Middle School Essay Division

WINNER: Lauren Scandrett
International School of Columbus – 7th Grade
Teacher: Ms. April Knipstine

High School Essay Division

WINNER: Katie Schmidt
East High School – 9th Grade
Teacher: Mrs. Abby Howe



Elementary Art Division

WINNER: Megan Henderson
Southside Elementary School – 6th Grade
Teacher: Mrs. Becky Williams

Middle School Art Division

WINNER: Emily Wilkerson
Central Middle School – 7th Grade
Teacher: Ms. Mindy Summers

High School Art Division

WINNER: Cecilia Gutknecht
Columbus Signature Academy, New Tech – 10th Grade
Teacher: Ms. Leslie Weaver

2010 HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ESSAY/ART CONTEST

PARTICIPATING JUDGES AND TEACHERS

Coordinating a countywide essay/art contest is a major undertaking that would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of volunteer judges, who are citizens from the community who gave up their time for several weeks in order to read the essays and select the winners. Area teachers, many of whom made the contest part of their school assignments, supported the essay contest, thereby insuring its success.

PARTICIPATING JUDGES

Lisa Siefker Bailey
Antonio Conejo
Cindy Felsten
Kevin Hilycord
Andrew Kirk
Olivia Pavlov
Susan Staley
Warren Ward

Chuck Boll, III
Mike Engelstad
Susie Gentry
Kylee Jones
Erik Lucas
Eric Riddle
Ginger Stawicki
April Wolfe-Scott

Rick Caldwell
Jodi Engelstad
Wayne Hanrattie
Ann King
Brian Murphy
John Roberts
Shirley Trapp
Thom Weintraut

2010 ESSAY/ART CONTEST PARTICIPATING TEACHERS

ABC STEWART

JERRY MAULIN
MINDY SUMMERS
HEATHER BUSH
JOHN BAGAN

COLS. SIGNATURE ACADEMY – CENTRAL CAMPUS:

BRIDGET STEELE
ANDREW FRAZITA

COLS. SIGNATURE ACADEMY LINCOLN CAMPUS:

COLS. SIGNATURE ACADEMY – NEW TECH:

LESLIE WEAVER

EAST HIGH SCHOOL

ABBY HOWE

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF COLS.

APRIL KNIPSTINE

NORTH HIGH SCHOOL

MIMI HAGEMAN

NORTHSIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL

CRYSTAL RIDDLE

RICHARDS ELEMENTARY

ELIZABETH LARSON

PARKSIDE ELEMENTARY

RITA BASS
EDIE LOGSTON

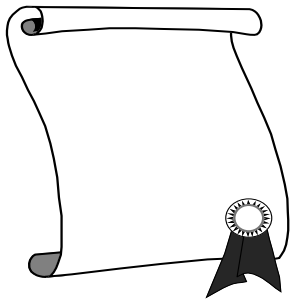
SMITH ELEMENTARY:

SHELBY DUNVILLE

JILL PRESTEL
MARK WALLACE
BECKY WILLIAMS

SOUTHSIDE ELEMENTARY:

CHUCK GRIMES
JUSTIN MOCAS



**ESSAY WINNER
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DIVISION**

**BY AHAAN SINGHAL
ABC STEWART MONTESSORI- 6TH GRADE
Teacher: Mr. Jerry Maulin**

My grandfather Mr. Bhagwati Prasad Singhal was born in Gwalior in the Central Province of India, Madhya Pradesh on October 7th, 1924. He grew up with an older brother and sister. He was part of a wealthy family because his father was a leading contractor and developer. But still, he had to walk three miles to school each way. Obviously, when he was a child, there were no modern gadgets. Even food was cooked on a wood-burning stove.

He graduated from V. C. High School in 1941. After that he attended Victoria College and was the first person in his family to go to college. His dad wanted him to be a doctor but, his mom wouldn't let him go to a medical school because she was worried about the hardships he would have to face. But he was very bright, motivated and believed in getting a good education. He went to Agra University to become a lawyer. Some of his classmates included the future prime minister of India, Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee and my mom's grandfather. He began practicing law in 1947 and continued to do so for over fifty years. He was the public prosecutor of the Gwalior Division from 1977-1980, serving a population of over five million people. He was awarded the "Lifetime Service Award" by the law community in 2004.

He was very active in public service. He was dedicated to improving the standard of education in his community. He was the president of an educational society board that managed four colleges and several schools. He was also the executive board member of Jiwaji University. What made his work so hard was that there was no background knowledge as India had recently become independent from British rule in 1947. He wrote the original policies, procedures and standards for the university, several of which are still in effect today. My mom and dad later graduated from the medical school affiliated with Jiwaji University.

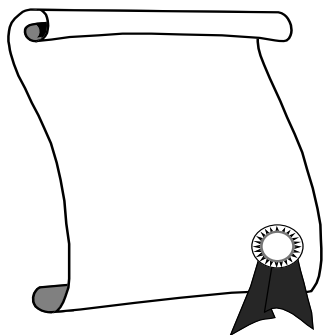
He has also been a strong activist for women's rights and he has pushed for constitutional amendments to enhance women's rights. His articles about this have been widely published in leading law journals and national newspapers.

One of the happiest moments in his life was when he married my grandmother on Valentine's Day, 1955. Another happy moment was when his two kids were born. A positive turning point in his life was when India won independence from British rule. One of the greatest challenges he faced was fighting against 19 months of dictatorship in 1975 when the current government suspended the public's constitutional rights. He was arrested several times when he participated in peaceful protests and demonstrations. This did not break his spirit but only hardened his resolve.

Losing my grandmother, his wife of over 50 years, was perhaps his greatest challenge. His strength and composure during her illness amazed me.

His advice to the youth of America is to learn to listen to people, to always be humble and to never stop fighting for what you believe in. I hope that one day I can live up to his ideals.



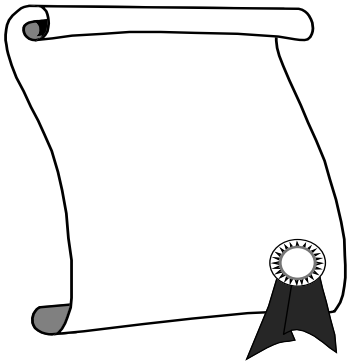


ESSAY WINNER
MIDDLE SCHOOL DIVISION
BY LAUREN SCANDRETT
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF COLUMBUS
– 7TH GRADE
Teacher: Ms. April Knipstine

Segregation was a big part of America during the 1930s. My grandmother recalls being afraid of “the black man” who was employed by her father. Raised in a small town in Kentucky, my grandmother was not exposed to many cultures other than her own. She was born into The Great Depression and World War II started when she was young. During those times my grandma discovered one of her most important sayings, “A penny saved is a penny earned.” She has applied this expression to her life and is very frugal. When she was ten years old, it was up to her to cook the noon meal, do the housework and to keep the fire going on the range stove. She persevered and became valedictorian in high school, went to college, married Vernon Scandrett. She then decided to go to South America with her family to become missionaries. In South America, she became immersed in the culture and realized that when you personally get to know someone, when you listen to a life, you see the person for who they really are, not just their religion or the color of their skin.

Now, after her six children have become adults, and after she has remarried, she continues to create and expand relationships with everyone she comes into contact with. She helps other people step across the barrier of different skin tones and to see into the soul. My Grandma is an amazing woman and I hope to make as much of an impact on people’s lives as she did.





ESSAY WINNER
HIGH SCHOOL DIVISION
BY KATIE SCHMIDT
EAST HIGH SCHOOL – 9TH GRADE
Teacher: Mrs. Abby Howe

The Right of Honor

Moments lead to experience; experience leads to wisdom. When interviewing my grandfather, I anticipated listening to his experiences as a soldier in the Vietnam War. I was not prepared to benefit from his wisdom.

Chester Chandler served two tours of duty as a communications specialist and as a platoon sergeant. He led patrols that lasted days across the humid, sweltering landscape of Vietnam. He was willing to sacrifice his own life for his country.

Yet when my grandfather returned from his first year of service, there was no homecoming celebration. He was even denied use of the front gates to an air base due to protesting against the unpopular war. My grandfather had served his country dutifully but had earned the title of ‘baby killer’.

Time has passed, and the despised soldier is now an honored veteran. Today, he proudly wears a hat that bears his veteran status, which draws many comments of gratitude. Although he is pleased by their thanks, he remarks sadly, “It should have happened back then.”

My grandfather has never asked for much; he simply desires appreciation for his service and recognition for those who died in action. As he remembers seeing flatbed trucks bearing caskets along dirt roads, he wants *them* to be recognized. When he recalls watching the “dead planes” fly overhead with covered windows and silent passengers, he wants *them* to receive recognition for their ultimate sacrifice.

Veterans do not forget but are often forgotten. Soldiers selflessly serve their country but are faced with animosity and even contempt from its citizens. I have always recognized my grandfather’s military service, but now I *appreciate* what he did for his country and for me. Soldiers, just like the citizens whom they protect, have rights and one is the right of honor.



2010 Quotable Quotes



“The most important thing I’ve learned from my grandma’s story was that I should persist in life.”

“I’ve always looked at work as an opportunity; it’s not a task that you have to do.”

“Kindness is the highest form of intelligence.”

“I learned that just because you think you know someone, you might not
and I think that’s a great lesson.”

“Not just thinking of yourself in life is a very important skill to have.”

“Goals, whether reached or not, inspire us to be more than we are.”

“...have fun, enjoy life and be the best you can be. Sometimes the ordinary life events are taken for granted, yet
they become the most precious.”

“One’s character truly shows when life presents sudden setbacks and challenges.”

“Love is what bridges the gap of generations.”

“It’s not what you have, it’s what you make of it.”

“I had no education because of poverty.”

“In life only you determine the outcome of what awaits you.”

“Don’t let the fear of striking out keep you from playing the game.”

“the four virtues my grandpa has always believed in are love, honesty, discipline and faith.”

“...a good life is when you’re happy with yourself and a successful life
is when you follow your dreams.”

“The choices we make are everything.”

“From my grandma’s life I learned that sometimes in life you have to sacrifice
the luxuries to have a good life.”

2010 Quotable Quotes

“ . . . never put down a hobby because you never know how it can help you in your future.”

“Laura has taught me that if you bring humor into every situation
then it really isn't ever as awful as it seems.”

“Just because something doesn't turn out the way it was planned
doesn't mean it will be detrimental to your life.”

“She brightens life's story with her views of peace and equality for everyone.”

“ . . . could see beyond the uniform and judge folks by how they treated him.
A true role model.” (World War II Vet comment about guarding POWs)”

“To be part of the community is worthwhile. . . . Making friends is important,
you build friendships and relationships together.”

“Her story is a magnificent reminder to stay strong through hardship and rejoice in small and
wonderful things of beauty as they develop and grow. . . .”

“My grandpa touched many lives with his ideals – work hard, help others and integrity.”

“No one's life is perfect. He did not aspire to be perfect, only to make the most
of the time he had.”

“Be yourself. Life is not a competition with the boy next door. . . .”

“you don't know how wealthy you are or how valuable things are until they
are all gone and they can be gone in the blink of an eye.”

“You can see a life just by listening intently to the details.”

“ . . . doing well, not perfection, should be a goal. Otherwise, you cannot forgive
yourself for the mistakes that you inevitably will make.”

“When you go around the world you realize how much we have
and how little others have. . . .”

“Stories are treasures for people of all ages.”

**COUNCIL LIAISON PRISCILLA SCALF AND
THE COLUMBUS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

**WISH TO THANK THE FOLLOWING OUTGOING COMMISSIONER
FOR HER DEDICATION AND HARD WORK**



Pamela Vincent

2008 – 2009

The Columbus Human Rights Commission

Columbus, Indiana

March 30, 2009

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AND FOR
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**The Columbus Human Rights Commission
Columbus, Indiana
May 6, 2010**

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**MAYOR FRED ARMSTRONG
COUNCIL LIAISON PRISCILLA SCALF
COLUMBUS CITY COUNCIL**



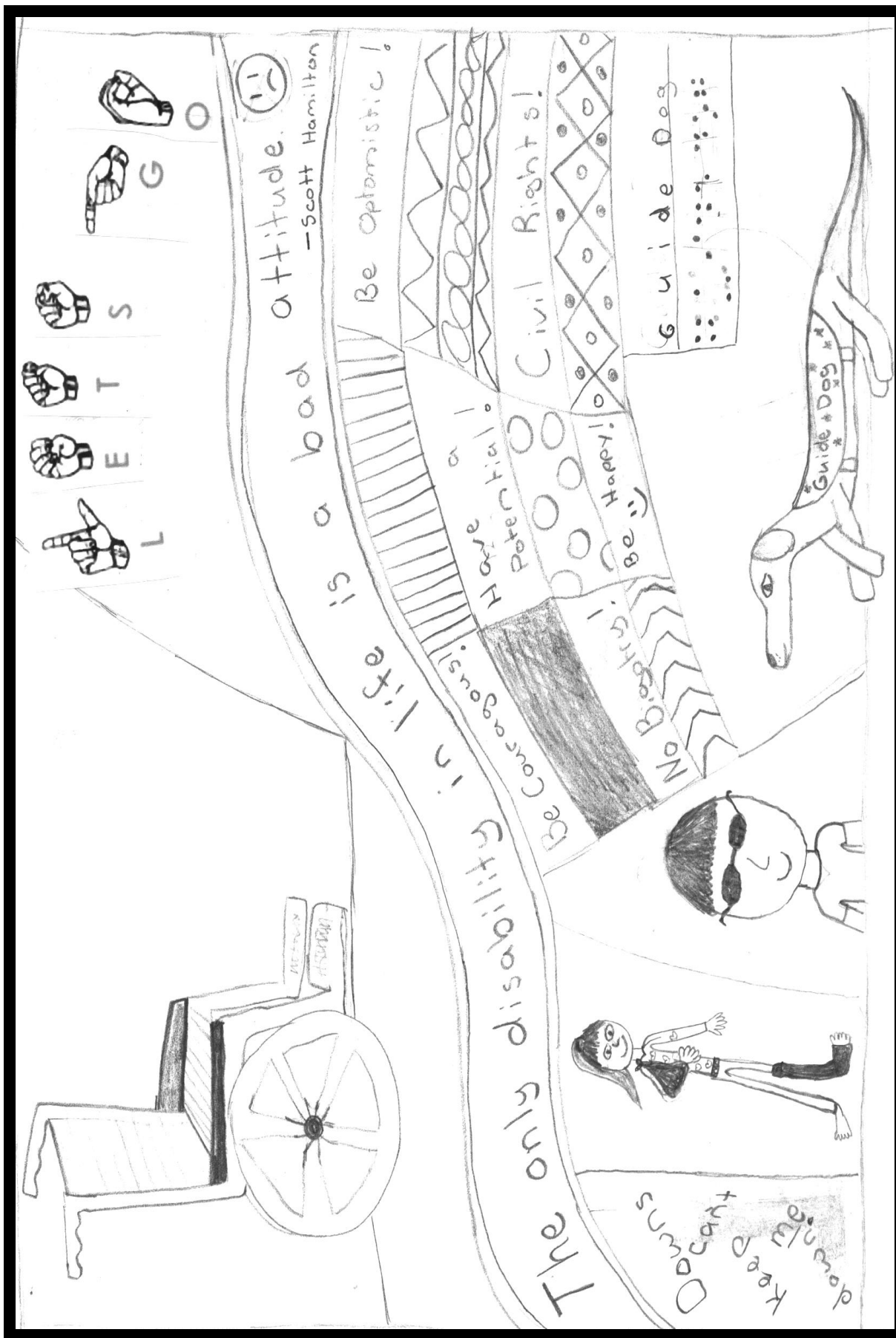
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